

and burying the pieces in different parts of the country in order to ensure the fertility of the ground and probably also the fecundity of man and beast. Whether regarded as the descendant of a god, as himself divine, or simply as a mighty enchanter, the king was believed to radiate magical virtue for the good of his subjects, quickening the seed in the earth and in the womb. This radiation of reproductive energy did not cease with his life; hence the people deemed it essential to preserve his body as a pledge of the continued prosperity of the country. It would be natural to imagine that the spot where the dead king was buried would enjoy a more than ordinary share of his blessed influence, and accordingly disputes would almost inevitably arise between different districts for the exclusive possession of so powerful a talisman. These disputes could be settled and local jealousies appeased by dividing the precious body between the rival claimants, in order that all should benefit in equal measure by its life-giving properties. This was certainly done in Norway with the body of Halfdan the Black, the descendant of the harvest-god Frey; it appears to have been done with the body of Seger, the sago-magician of Kiwai; and we may conjecture that in prehistoric times it was done with the bodies of Egyptian kings, who personated Osiris, the god of fertility. In general and of the corn in particular. At least such a practice would account for the legend of the mangling of the god's body and the distribution of the pieces throughout

Apparently widespread custom of dismembering a king or magician and burying the pieces in different parts of the kingdom.

In this dismemberment a special virtue seems to have been ascribed to the genital organs.

Egy grow
pt. well, he will take the body of a
In man who has died In
this full vigour and cut minute portions
conn of tissue from the foot,
exio the leg, the arm, the face, and the
n nail of a single finger
the in order to compound a fertilizing
stor medicine out of them.
y But the most Important part of
that the medicine consists
the of the dead man's generative
geni organs, which are removed
tal entire. All these pieces of the
mem corpse are fried with herbs
ber ¹ See above, p. 10.

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